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REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending in the application. Claims 1 and 25 have been amended by the present amendment. The amendment is fully supported by the specification as originally filed (see, e.g., page 34, line 23 to page 35, line 6).

Claims 1 and 25 have been amended to clarify that the transfer gate of a corresponding register block is brought into an ON-state only when there is a change of output of the flip-flop of the corresponding register block.

For example, with reference to FIGS. 1, 2C, and 2D of the application, the transfer gate TG1 is brought into an ON-state only in a specified period during which the output OUT1 of the flip-flop FF1 changes (see, e.g., specification at page 35, lines 4-6). Referring to FIGS. 2C and 2D, "CTL1" represents a control signal for turning ON the transfer gate TG1 (see FIG. 2C), and "OUT1" represents an output of the flip-flop FF1. As shown in FIGS. 2C and 2D, the transfer gate is ON (see steps in FIG. 2C) only when an output OUT1 of the flip-flop changes (see slanted lines in FIG. 2D).

Claims 1-11 and 25 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,128,974 to Mackawa in view of U.S. Patent 5,602,561 to Kawaguchi et al. (hereinafter "Kawaguchi"). Claims 12-24 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maekawa in view of Kawaguchi, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,572,211 to Erhart et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Mackawa and Kawaguchi references, whether taken alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest a shift register circuit in which a transfer gate of a corresponding register block is brought into an ON-state only in a specified period during which an output of the flip-flop of the corresponding register block changes.

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The Maekawa reference was explained in detail in Applicants' response of December 30, 2003, which is incorporated by reference herein. In Maekawa, the signal VOR<sub>1</sub> serves as an input to the transfer gates SW<sub>1</sub> and SW<sub>2</sub> – when VOR<sub>1</sub> is high, the transfer gates SW<sub>1</sub> and SW<sub>2</sub> are ON (see time period T in FIG. 8) (see also column 4, lines 49-55). The output OUT<sub>1</sub> represents an output of the unit register SR<sub>1</sub> (see column 4, lines 32-35).

It is apparent from FIG. 8 that the transfer gates SW<sub>1</sub> and SW<sub>2</sub> (see VOR<sub>1</sub>) are turned ON at t<sub>1</sub> and remain ON until t<sub>4</sub>. The output OUT<sub>1</sub> of unit register SR<sub>1</sub> is high between t<sub>2</sub> and t<sub>4</sub>. Therefore, the transfer gates SW<sub>1</sub> and SW<sub>2</sub> are not brought into an ON-state only when an output OUT1 of the "flip-flop" changes. Instead, the transfer gates SW<sub>1</sub> and SW<sub>2</sub> are turned at a time t<sub>1</sub>, which is **before** the time t<sub>2</sub> that the output OUT1 of the "flip flop" becomes high. Therefore, Maekawa does not teach or suggest the Applicants' claimed invention.

In the Response to Arguments section of the Final Office Action (page 9), the Examiner stated:

Up until the period (t2) the output of the flip-flop (OUT1) is in a low state and the transfer gates are [turned] off (column 4, lines 42-48), but when the output of the flip-flop is in a high state the transfer gates are turned on (see column 4, lines 52-60)."

However, in Maekawa, the transfer gates SW<sub>1</sub> and SW<sub>2</sub> are turned on **before** OUT1 becomes high.

As shown in FIG. 8 of Maekawa, VOR<sub>1</sub> represents an input to the transfer gates, and VOR<sub>1</sub> becomes high at time t<sub>1</sub> (see column 4, lines 52-55: "The output and an inverted High level output VOR<sub>1</sub> ... are supplied to the transfer gates SW<sub>1</sub> and SW<sub>2</sub>, turning both gates on.") As specified in column 4, line 50, this change in VOR<sub>1</sub> occurs at time t<sub>1</sub>, but the output OUT<sub>1</sub> does not change until time t<sub>2</sub>.

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Therefore, it is apparent that the transfer gates SW<sub>1</sub> and SW<sub>2</sub> are turned ON (represented by signal VOR<sub>1</sub>) at time t<sub>1</sub>, which occurs before the output OUT<sub>1</sub> changes at time t<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, Mackawa does not teach or suggest that a transfer gate of a corresponding register block is brought into an ON-state only in a specified period during which an output of the flip-flop of the corresponding register block changes.

Claims 3-24 incorporate the subject matter of claim 1, and thus are patentable over the cited combination of references, for at least the reasons discussed above.

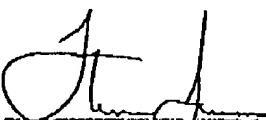
It is believed that the claims are in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Applicants believe that additional fees are not required for consideration of the within response. However, if for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, the Commissioner is hereby authorized and requested to charge Deposit Account No. 04-1105.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: March 2, 2005

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